



Conscious Life presents

Anxiety in the Digital Age

Guest - Amber Benziger

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[00:00:09] Jaï Bristow

Hello and welcome back. My name is Jaï Bristow, and I'm one of your hosts. And today, I am very pleased to be welcoming back the wonderful Amber Benziger. Amber is a psychotherapist, anxiety coach, and the creator of the Anxiety Lab. Welcome.

Amber Benziger

Thank you so much for having me back. I'm excited about this one.

Jaï Bristow

Me too. Today we're talking about anxiety in the digital age. So I thought maybe I'd ask you first what that means exactly. What are some ways that anxiety manifests and can show up, specifically in relation to this new digital age?

Amber Benziger

Yes. I mean, everything is online now. I mean, even we're having this conversation online. So there's a lot of pressure to be online. And for someone that struggles with anxiety, that can show up in such a huge way, right? Just feeling the pressure of being online, not missing something, feeling like you have to constantly post or capture what's going on in your life so that everybody can see it and it looks pretty. We say, "Is it Instagram-worthy?" So there's a lot of that.

And then what to say and when, when there are large world topics coming up, how involved do I get? How much do I want to say? And show up on those types of things. And then the fear of missing out if I'm not checking online. It's just a lot of constant... Am I doing it right? Am I doing it enough? Am I there? Am I seeing it all? Am I showing up this way?

That our brains really weren't meant to have that much information. There's a lot of great stuff online, but there's also a lot of pressures that come with that. And if you're already struggling with anxiety, it can be difficult to just consume it all and then figure out what to do and how to consume it and how am I going to show up.

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So it definitely presents a lot of pressures that I think maybe we didn't realize. And also that's what it's meant to do. It's meant to keep us there. But is that really good for us, mentally, physically, emotionally, to be so attached to those devices?

Jaï Bristow

100%. I think that's such an interesting question you just brought up there, showing that it's designed, a lot of technology is designed to keep us hooked, but is that really good for us, especially for those of us with anxiety? I'm curious because in some of the examples you gave, it felt like maybe it's aimed at younger people. Do you think that it's true across generations, or do you think it's slightly different, the impacts of anxiety on different generations?

Amber Benziger

I think that for young people, a lot of people either grew up with it or are coming of age with it, like millennials and younger. We had the internet, and then Gen Zs always had that. So this is what we're used to. So it becomes such a part of their life.

So the anxiety might not be at the forefront of their mind like, "Oh, wait, I am anxious about that," because it has become such a big part. But when it's taken away or not having access to it and wanting to be on it or wanting to be informed and the anxiety of how I'm showing up and what I'm looking at in the pictures, I think that it impacts that community differently.

But I also feel like with older generations, there's still a lot of knowledge and community there. So there's still that desire to want to be there. It's just maybe not as ingrained as it's needed because they didn't grow up with it. But definitely once you start, it's hard to stop because, again, it's made to have that impact of coming back and having that addictive nature. It's also a place where you can find people and have that sense of community.

So there is that desire to be a part of that. And then the generational bridge of like, I'm going to put this on this platform so my grandma on the other side of the world can see it. You know what I mean? So it brings everybody together in a way, but there's still the impact of that generation. Each generation has their own impact on what that anxiety looks like. So I don't think it's only this generation that is impacted by the anxiety of feeling like you have to show up on social media. I think it just shows up differently for everyone.

Jaï Bristow

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And I really hear in what you're saying as well that you're not demonizing social media or the progress of technology. But just recognizing that it has an impact and that, like you say, for the generations that really grew up with it, might not even be aware of the impacts and how anxious and dependent we can be on it.

Whereas for other generations, it might be more obvious, but there still can be a lot of anxiety. Maybe let's go into some of those impacts. What... Could you name? What are the impacts of social media, specifically, but also just technology advancement in general on anxiety?

Amber Benziger

Well, there's definitely information overload, right? If you're an anxious person, you're already feeling a lot of overwhelm and trying to categorize things and figure things out. So when you're

given a lot of information, some of it true, some of it not true, that can be very difficult to manage on how to navigate that.

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Do I believe this? How do I absorb this? What do I do with it? So it can just feel very overwhelming. And it can also feel like you're trapped, right? Because you want the information, you want to be informed, and that's the message that we get, right? You have to stay informed. You can't look away.

At the same time, we have to be reasonable, and we have to do it within our own limitations and our own boundaries, which is really hard to even figure out what those are and then set them for ourselves. So I feel like that's a huge one, just the information overload. We weren't designed to be able to have access to that much information at once. So it's a lot for our brains to take in and then figure out what to do with.

And if you're already a highly anxious person, someone that's easily overwhelmed, that can feel like this is too much, but I can't turn it off. So now I'm stuck in this anxious cycle of consuming, and then what the heck do I do with this?

And then there's also the desensitization of what we're seeing, where we see a lot, and some of it is very, very heavy. But if we're seeing it so often, do we lose the impact of that? And then what does that feel like, especially for someone that's anxious? Are we holding on to more of it than someone that maybe has less anxiety? So while people around us may be desensitized, how are we feeling about that impact?

Are we feeling like something's wrong with us because we do care so much, but we should care? Again, it goes back to that boundary. So I feel like there's that. And then there's that fear of missing out. We all have that.

And when something happens and we're not connected or we don't see it right away or somebody texts us or calls us or shares something with us and we didn't see that, it's like, "Oh, my gosh, I wasn't a part of that". Feeling anxious, feeling like we're missing out. So I feel like those can really impact somebody that has anxiety.

Jaï Bristow

Yeah, that makes so much sense because one of the things I've talked a lot with people about at this conference is anxieties are often a lot of overstimulation, right? And so, as you say, that information overload from one device in your hand or from your computer, whatever, is receiving so much.

Of course, it's going to create that overstimulation and exacerbate the anxiety, which may already be there. That desensitization, I'm wondering if you want to say a little bit more about that piece around the desensitization and specifically in how that impacts anxiety.

Amber Benziger

Yeah. If we think about it, we're seeing a lot of these events close up more so than we would if... Pre-internet or pre-access to social media. Not only are we seeing the events, but we're also seeing people's opinions of these events. If it's a catastrophe or something that's impacting... We'll

say, a social group or an age, we'll talk about when we see mass shootings or something like that, or in schools.

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We're seeing it so often and are we becoming less emotionally attached to what that really means, those big things, and how does that impact our anxiety? Are we becoming overwhelmed by that? Are we becoming, okay, this is part of our life. So now we feel like this is what we're supposed to feel like. We're constantly trapped in this anxiety of those situations because we're seeing it so often.

And then not only are we seeing it, but we're seeing other people's opinions of them. So there's that that we're taking on, and we're figuring out how to process and how we're feeling. And, wait, am I feeling wrong? So the anxiety of that because this person is saying this, and this person is saying this, and then we're caught up in it.

And it's like that thing, we want to look at it, but we can't look away. So there's the anxiety of that, of this really bad thing happening. Here we all are seeing it. We're experiencing it, trying to figure out how to process that, feeling overwhelmed by our emotions. And then also now we're impacted by some other person's opinion that we don't even know about.

And how are we feeling and how are we taking that in? So people are wondering why am I not able to sleep at night after I just looked on my phone and scrolled TikTok, Instagram? Whatever platform you choose to use. Why am I feeling so anxious about this?

Because I do see this often, and obviously, it's a big thing that happened, and I do feel a lot of emotions connected to it, but also it feels so far away now. But we don't realize it's like, how is that affecting our nervous system? How is that affecting our body? So it's not just seeing it, but how is that impacting us in our function and our cognitive abilities and our window of tolerance?

Are we building up a tolerance for this? And is that going to be good for me in the long run? Am I becoming detached from how I'm feeling, where I feel like, okay, yeah, I'm detached.

But really my body is holding on to that and I'm having a lot of anxiety, whether that's coming out in headaches, lack of sleep or in other physical ways that maybe we're not thinking of. Am I having random panic attacks that I don't even realize are attached to that because I feel so desensitized from what's going on, but really it is impacting me.

Jai Bristow

It's really interesting the way you're talking about it, that it's impacting us almost unconsciously. And so there's something that switches off that we're like, "I see so much of it that I'm not having an obvious immediate reaction."

And yet noticing, oh, my sleep's not so good, or like, oh, I'm having random panic attacks, or I'm having more arguments with someone or whatever it is, which are often symptoms of anxiety. And yet we might not consciously realize it because it's almost like, I guess. Is it to do with dissociation, would you say?

[00:12:27] Amber Benziger

Absolutely. I think those are things that we do to protect ourselves. We go into survival mode. We can dissociate, we can isolate. We're constantly watching things, but we're isolating ourselves from family or friends or talking about it in actual community, and we're just taking all this information in and not knowing how to deal with it.

Or are we dissociating in those moments when I see it, but I don't want to let it in, but it's still impacting us. Maybe we're like, okay, I don't feel it, but is it coming up in different ways throughout our body? So I think we see these things and we go into survival mode, and we don't realize how they're impacting us and how they may be increasing our anxiety because it doesn't look like I'm panicking in a moment while I'm seeing it.

We could be harboring it, and it could be coming out in different ways. And anxiety doesn't always look like overthinking. It can be very physical in nature. It can be hard to read. It can be that panic. It can be headaches. It can be shaking in our body. It can come out... It can feel like I'm always cold or I'm overheated. So we might not even realize how much viewing these things is impacting our stress levels and our anxiety.

Jaï Bristow

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And you talked earlier about the nervous system. Can you say more about how engaging with so much... This information overload and the desensitization you've just talked about how it can often put us in survival mode without necessarily even realizing it. Do you want to talk more about the impact on the nervous system of being exposed to all of this information?

Amber Benziger

Absolutely. We all have our window of tolerance. The things that we can handle when something happens, when something comes up, when something is uncertain or "bad" happens. We all have this ability to tolerate it, when that window closes, and then we are either in that fight or flight.

If we are in that, we're seeing these things, it can be outside our window of tolerance, then we can become more anxious. Our nervous system is offset. We're not feeling regulated, so we're not able to maintain our emotions. We're not able to manage as well as we would like to or as well as we could when we are within our window of tolerance.

And I think that a lot of times when we're viewing things on social media, we're viewing things on the internet, that can shift our window of tolerance very quickly. And then impact our nervous system about how we feel dysregulated.

So we couldn't feel... That's why we're watching videos, we're crying. We're in our emotions, we're shaking, we're feeling upset, we feel our chest tighten, and we're like, "What is going on? I'm just scrolling my TikTok feed or whatever it is."

Because it is impacting our stress levels, it's impacting that fight or flight. Again, we're having a lot of information that we're seeing and that is showing up within our bodies. We're not at our baseline because we are being triggered in some way by what we're seeing.

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So I think we forget that, yeah, these things activate our nervous system. These things are bringing stress levels. These things are knocking us off of our baseline.

And then we get off of the internet or we get off of our phone, we put it down, and we're in this heightened state, and then we're snapping at the people around us or we are isolating and we don't want to go out. We don't want to do things because we've received all this information and we're not doing anything with it. We're just sitting in it and we don't realize how much it's impacting us.

So really being able to put up those boundaries and see, is this too much? Is this why I'm up all night? Is this why I'm procrastinating and not able to get things done during the day? Or is this impacting the way that I'm showing up and how I'm feeling about myself and the world around me and how I'm interacting with the world around me?

Is that changing us? I think those are things that we don't think about because we are deeming it, oh, this is just how it is. But it doesn't have to be that way. I think we don't realize how much it really is impacting our bodies.

Jai Bristow

I'm really noticing the way you're talking about that window of tolerance and how often we're taken outside of that window and our nervous system is stimulated and we're taken away from baseline and we're not even realizing we're doing it, and we're doing it all from our sofa or our bed or the subway or whatever it is.

And that then the impact that can have on our everyday lives, our lives outside of the screen and our non-virtual lives. Like you say, snapping at the people around us, not going out as much, and really being impacted like that.

The other thing that I'm really noticing is, you talked earlier about how often it's designed to keep us hooked. Because of the addictive nature, sometimes we put our phone down, then we notice we're feeling restless. And so what do we do? We pick our phones back up.

Amber Benziger

Yeah, because it's designed to give us that hit of dopamine, that pleasure. So we want that again. So yeah, maybe we saw something that wasn't what we wanted to see, and that heightened our nervous system and made us feel off. But we can scroll right to the next video, and it can be a cute little animal doing something, and we're getting that hit.

We're getting that, "Oh, I like this. I like this feeling." It keeps us hooked, even though it might not be what's actually good for us, but it feels good for us at the moment. And that's why it can become so addicting. So yes, there are amazing parts, but I'm not saying never go on the internet.

But it has to be within limitations, and we have to start really being in tune to ourselves and how we're feeling and how it's impacting us. Because is it doing more harm than good? Am I putting myself in a position to react and show up in ways that I don't like? For what? Because this system was built to keep us interactive. That's why we can think we've been on it for five minutes and we've been on for hours.

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And then we leave our body all stressed out, but we're not doing anything about that. We don't go back and check in with ourselves and soothe ourselves and figure out what we need. We just keep going and keep going.

And of course, we're going to have increased anxiety if we're doing that. We're constantly going, going, going and not taking care of ourselves. That's going to trigger anybody's anxiety, especially if you're already someone that is highly anxious. Think how much more that's impacting you.

Jaï Bristow

Absolutely. And as you say, that's the thing when you're on social media or the internet. It's that you don't always know what you're going to be exposed to. So one video might be really activating, and then the next video might be cute kittens who give you a dopamine hit, and then the next video might be something that's massively triggering or something like that, right?

And I think, I'm wondering if you want to say anything about that, about phobias and triggers and the ways that we can't always limit what we're seeing and have access to on the internet.

Amber Benziger

Yeah. I mean, there's not a trigger warning on everything. And even if there is, sometimes that can be triggering in itself to see trigger warning, whatever that is. Just seeing those words or whatever can be impactful to you. I think that's the great thing about the internet, the relatability of seeing like, okay, this could just be Susie down the street. It doesn't have to be this big-time celebrity.

But also, is that more impactful because it's so close? So just feeling like you have to access it. The trauma, the impact of what we're seeing. If we have experienced something, say someone struggling with their relationship with their body and their relationship with food, and we're seeing a lot of people that are exercising constantly or talking about how they prepare their meals, what is that doing for you?

We don't even realize that, oh, we're consuming this, and this could be triggering something that was in our past because it seems so... It seems so harmless. It just seems like, oh, okay. But is that the messaging in our brain of like, oh, we need to start doing that again? It's just like, oh, we need to buy this. Oh, we need to be doing this.

And we start to label ourselves. We go back into old habits. It could trigger traumas that we're not even aware of. It also can put the idea in our head of like, oh, all those like, put a finger down if you have this, and then there's this diagnosis.

So then is it like, now I'm diagnosing myself and something's wrong with me. Is it the constant need for healing or finding these issues? Are we constantly looking for that? And that can also be traumatic. If I feel like something's wrong with me, so I'm constantly feeding into these self-help arenas, where is this information even correct? So are we feeding into misinformation and how can that impact us and show up in traumatic ways?

So I think, again, something else that we're not thinking of when we're just picking up our phone and scrolling, what are we seeing? What is the algorithm feeding us? And what has it decided that we want? And is this what we want to consume? And how is it impacting us overall and our

experiences? Because it does start to know us, so it knows what our experiences are and what we like to watch, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

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So again, to use the body image or food relationship. Are we subconsciously looking for those things, even though we know we've had some issues in the past? And how is that impacting us and our future?

And it's so easily accessible and readily available, and it seems harmless, but is it doing more harm than good for us individually? Because there's another person in your house that may not impact them the way that it's impacting you. So just be aware of what it is that you're consuming.

Jaï Bristow

Yeah. I think that piece around unconscious messages is so important. I wasn't even thinking about that, about this idea that you should look a certain way or stuff around food and diet, and some of it is explicit and some of it isn't so explicit.

And then we start questioning ourselves based on who we see and that piece around self-diagnosing and pathologizing everyone. All that kind of thing is going to have a huge impact on our mental health. Then there's also more explicit things, like I have a phobia of a certain animal. I can't control if I see pictures of that animal or not on social media.

Then the piece you were saying about ideals and body images. I think, again, you and I are a similar generation. We grew up much more with billboards and models of the archetype and the ideal. And yet it always felt like that was kind of removed.

Whereas these days, with all the influencers and the influencer culture, it feels like anyone can be one of those famous models and beautiful people. At the same time, it can also feel like, "Oh, what's wrong with me that I'm not like that?" Even more, I think, than when it was the models on the billboards. I wonder if you have anything you'd like to add to that.

Amber Benziger

Absolutely. I think there have been studies and research that's continuously coming out talking about that, about appearance. And of course, yeah, like we said, there was a lot of that culture with us growing up, but it was more like magazines, and it seemed more unattainable.

Like, this is this archetype of person, and we're the normal people. It'd be lovely to be this archetype person, but it seemed far away. And even still, that was impactful to young impressionable people. But now, you're right. Okay, well, this is just this girl down the street or this person, and there's all these advertisements, or I did these things, and we can't back check it.

So it very much is like, "Is something wrong with me? Or why can't I do this? Or why can't I be like this?" Or like, "All these people can be these influencers and have this fame. Am I not good enough?"

And that "I'm not good enough" core belief is in a lot of us already. So is social media triggering that? Is it feeding into that and keeping us stuck where we are constantly following these people

and buying the things that they're saying because it made them this way so it can make me this way?

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Constantly trying to make ourselves better, which... Bettering yourself isn't a bad thing, but what's the intention behind it? Have we lost ourselves? Are we trying to be something that we're not? And do we even actually want to be that? Or is that the messaging that we're receiving? And how is that playing on into our core beliefs, into our view of ourselves, into that anxious person, that anxious thought process of like, "Oh, I do need this", or "Maybe I would be better as that."

Is that exacerbating our anxiety and those anxious thoughts that are ruminating around like, "I can be better, and this is going to make that." So I think, again, being aware. And that's not what the internet is telling us to be more aware, because they want us to still feed into those things on social media platforms.

So that awareness is lacking, and we can get caught up so easily in the influence of it all. And I think, like I said, we're seeing a lot of research and a lot of people coming out and talking about how this is impacting, especially the younger generation, of what is actual reality versus what is not reality?

Because, again, people can get behind their phone and say whatever that is, and how it is impacting someone that's impressionable and trying to figure out their way. So there's a lot of anxiety around that, around that generation and older generations concerned about those younger generations and what that looks like. So I think, again, being more intentional. But it's hard to remember to do that, especially when that's not what's being fed to us.

Jaï Bristow

100 %. And you were saying that, I'm not good enough. That's what a lot of anxiety is. So of course, it's going to be feeding that. And you've talked a lot about the misinformation piece, and I think that that's really a big part of it as well.

And I'm also really struck by how the other big difference between the magazines and billboards versus now, for example, is that you had to be a certain age, right? So we'd see people of a certain age, whereas now you get three-year-olds who are going viral and are internet-famous, and it's like you have to have a million subscribers by the time you're six. It's a lot.

Amber Benziger

That's really funny. I have two kids, my youngest is eight and constantly talking about, "I need to have this YouTube channel, and I want to do this." It's cool that there are new career ideas and ways to express yourself and be creative. No way am I knocking that if that's what's best for you.

But it's also when I ask them the intention behind it, it's like, "Well, I could have these followers, and how many likes could I get?" As a parent, that's a little terrifying to me if that's what's important. That's the desire.

And what am I doing to be a part of that? How am I keeping them safe? But allowing them to express themselves. So navigating that is really difficult when that's the norm now. This is what we do, so why aren't you letting me do it?

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From a parent standpoint, and then just from a therapist standpoint, I need to check in. Okay, but how much is too much at this age to consume and to put yourself out there? I can only imagine, and that's just a young person. So now we have teenagers and we have 20-somethings.

We're adults and we're still trying to figure that out. How is that impacting our children's brains and their nervous system and how they're showing up and what's important to them and what's reality? I know for me, as a parent, that causes me a lot of anxiety.

Jaï Bristow

I bet. When I was eight, I worried about the kids in my class where there was... I grew up in a rural town, and there was about 10 kids in my class, and I was worried about them liking me. Not the whole internet, which is a lot of pressure. I think that that's a whole other...

Amber Benziger

Exactly.

Jaï Bristow

Like you say, that's the anxiety from the kids' age and the impact on the nervous system and the desire and need of feeling not good enough and wanting to be liked by thousands or more of people. And as a parent, that's a huge thing as well.

And you and I talked a bit about the anxiety of parenting in another interview, which people can check out on the Conscious Life platform. So I recommend people do that.

Amber, there's so many more aspects I think we could talk about around the ways that anxiety shows up and the impact of social media on the nervous system and on anxiety in general.

But I really want to make sure we have time to talk about some of the strategies to deal with all of this. You talked a little bit about boundaries and about ways of calming our nervous system and coming back to baseline. But I'm wondering, could you say some more about how we can manage anxiety in this digital age?

Amber Benziger

Absolutely. I think boundaries are the number one thing. Really checking in with yourself to see, how am I feeling after I'm consuming this? I always say to do a run-through for yourself. Who am I following? What am I consuming? We're always so worried about what I am consuming in my body through food and liquid, things like that.

But what am I consuming in the digital age? What social media people am I following? How do I feel after I watch what they're putting out there? How do I feel after that content? Am I feeling good? Am I feeling shame or guilt that I'm not, again, good enough? Or is this good for me?

And maybe is it time to eliminate some of them? I know, obviously, people want to be informed. So I think there's a lot to like, I want to follow people that are giving me news or current events in the media.

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But how much do I want to watch? So I know some people create multiple accounts. Here's my account where I follow comedians and cat accounts. And then here's where I follow the news. So I can go on when I need to, but I'm putting up that boundary for myself. I'm figuring out what my intention is.

Putting on timers. A lot of phones obviously have that, that I'm going to put in, I can be on this for an hour, and then it reminds me or it shuts it down. That's helpful. Putting your phone down at night, at least an hour before bed. Maybe coloring or journaling or something to help calm your nervous system instead of increasing it.

Think about your small child, you don't really give them a lot of sugar before bed because you want them to calm down. They're not running laps around the house and then putting them to bed. It's the same thing for yourself. Are you consuming that social media, getting yourself wound up before bed?

So really thinking about being intentional on how you're taking care of yourself. Is that the first thing that you're picking up in the morning? Creating a short morning routine for yourself and a short night time routine for yourself that doesn't include social media can have a huge impact. Having a detox once in a while, even if it's like, "I'm not going to go on social media every Wednesday." I know that sounds really difficult.

So even if it's like, "I'm going to cut back an hour, I'm going to cut back..." Just giving yourself that little bit of time away can be really, really helpful and show a huge impact on yourself.

And asking yourself, "What is my intention? Why do I want to do this? Do I feel like I need to? And is it limiting me from doing something else that I want to do or something that I used to do and I haven't anymore? And how can I incorporate that back into my life instead of this?"

Jaï Bristow

Yeah, I think that those boundaries are all super-helpful. And I like the way you were like, "You don't give your kids sugar just before bed. Don't give yourself the Instagram sugar before bed."

That thing of making sure you have time in the mornings and evenings that don't involve your phone and technology and social media and the internet and stuff like that because it can so... As we talked about earlier, it has such an impact on one's mood and one's sleep.

Then it can create these vicious cycles where we become addicted. Those are some really great suggestions around boundaries. I'm wondering if you have some tools around if we've been activated and our nervous system is revved up from use of social media, how do we bring it back down?

Amber Benziger

Leaning into support outside of social media can always be good. Having conversations, talking to family. I mean, if you have access to therapy, that can be really helpful, too, to process maybe some of the triggers that are coming up.

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Journaling is a great way. I'm a huge fan of journaling. Especially if you're feeling overwhelmed in those moments, getting it all out on paper can be really helpful, and it's right there. So if there's not someone around or obviously you don't have access to therapy or an appointment or something like that, a paper and pen is right there for you.

Just doing some simple deep breathing exercises to regulate yourself and ground yourself back into the moment because it can be really easy to cycle and spin in that anxiety after seeing something that triggered you. So just do some deep breathing.

Get outside and moving your body in such a natural way of just walking, breathing in some fresh air, walking around your house, just getting up and getting out of that head space and back into your surroundings, especially right in that moment, can be really helpful.

Put the phone down. Put it down. Walk away from it, can really just get you to regulate and escape from that and get back into reality, because I think that's the difficult part. We just get so sucked into our phone and we forget what's going on in the present day.

So what can you do to reconnect in that present day? Dive into your senses. Maybe light your favorite candle, pull out your lavender, even just doing simple hand rubbing or pressure points to feel back into your body, especially when you're dysregulated, you feel so outside of your body.

So what can I do to feel back into my body? Go wash your hands and feel the water and be able to smell the sensations of the soap, or feel the sensations of the water and smell the soap. Just really connecting back with yourself.

Jaï Bristow

I love all of those. And I know how much you love journaling. We also have a chat about journaling as a tool for your anxiety, which is also available on the Conscious Life platform. Are there any other tools or strategies that you think are useful for managing anxiety, specifically around technology and social media?

Amber Benziger

I think people are afraid to block or mute. Don't be afraid. We have to protect ourselves and our mental health and our peace. We can still stay informed, but we don't have to bombard ourselves with a page that's making us feel unsafe. If something you feel like it's harmful or unsafe, take a step back and ask yourself why that is and why do I feel like I need to be a part of that?

There's a lot of keyboard warriors out there. Do we need to keep them in our comments section of something that we posted? How is that benefiting us? How is that benefiting them? How are we using our platform? So just being more aware of that and not feeling guilt or shame for having to be like this is not something that I want to tolerate.

Jaï Bristow

Yeah, I love that. It's taking a break, not just from social media in general, but from certain accounts, certain people that we don't really owe people anything online.

[00:39:59] Amber Benziger

100%.

Jaï Bristow

I think that's really important. Amber, is there anything else you would like to add before we wrap up today?

Amber Benziger

I think just reminding yourself that these apps were created to keep us there. But our brains weren't prepared for all this information at once. So if you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed, you're not alone.

Now that we know some things, we know a little differently, maybe we can be more intentional and start to be more aware of what we're consuming and how it's impacting you so that it doesn't have to be so overwhelming. That you can be in charge of what you are viewing and what you're doing and how much access you give it. So it's okay to take a break and step away, if that's what you need.

Jaï Bristow

Thank you so much for that. How can people find out more about you and your work?

Amber Benziger

Yeah, you can find out everything that I do on my website, ambervsanxiety.com. It's my same username on Instagram as well.

Jaï Bristow

Thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciate it.

Amber Benziger

Thank you.